

Board of Chosen Freeholder~ County of Burlington New Jersey



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Burlington County Health Department

COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2004

The Community

Burlington County is the largest county in the state with a population in 2000 of approximately 400,000, covering 819 square miles. Its area covers 529,351 acres of which 524,160 are land and 5,191 are water. It extends from the Delaware River to the Great Bay on the Atlantic Ocean. It is bounded on the north by Mercer County, on the northeast by Monmouth County, on the east by Ocean County, on the southwest by Atlantic County and on the west by Camden County. There are forty political subdivisions, consisting of three cities, thirty-one townships, and six boroughs. The county seat is located in Mount Holly.

Rich in historic lore, with a splendid system of highways, the county holds an irresistible charm to the traveler and tourist. The pinewoods, sparkling with streams and lakes and filled with bird and animal life, attract many motorists. Below Chatsworth are the "Plains," unique in eastern geography, a great mass of land covered with bush-like growth of scrub oak, pine and laurel. While the county is principally known for its agriculture, there is considerable manufacturing, particularly along the Delaware River front.

Burlington County has always been one of the leading agricultural counties in the country. The largest blueberries in the world were developed and raised here. The cranberry, which was found growing wild when the first settlers arrived, is a considerable industry. It is the second largest cranberry-producing county in the United States. There are more acres devoted to farming than any other county in the state, producing much of the sweet corn and fruit raised. It runs a close second in timberland in the state.

While the county still retains vast areas of open space, development, with an increasing population is creating numerous environmental issues to be faced.

Local Environmental Issues

The issues of Burlington County are directly related to the strategic goals for the entire state. Air pollution, primarily in the area of obnoxious odors is a prime issue in the middle to northern areas of the county. Remediation of known contaminated sites is a major issue in all municipalities. Individual septic systems and wells service many municipalities in the county. To these areas groundwater contamination and water quality are of prime importance. Surface water quality

remains a significant issue throughout the county based upon the numerous lake bathing areas and water recreation activities. In recent years indoor air quality has shown the most significant increase in the number of investigations conducted. These items in conjunction with the activities listed hereafter represent our local environmental issues.

Burlington County is currently conducting a Protocol for Assessing Excellence in Environmental Health through a partnership with CDC. PACE EH is a proven methodology promulgated by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). This extensive process is a community based environmental health assessment that engages the community stakeholders and public health partners to assess public health issues and concerns, generate an environmental issues list and set priorities for action. The procedure is an on-going process that thrives on community involvement. By instituting this process we hope to broaden our public health partnerships and serve our communities by focusing on the environmental health issues they are most concerned with, allowing the community to be part of the decision making process.

Strategic Environmental Goals

1. Goal: Clean Air

The air throughout Burlington County will be healthful to breathe, and air pollutants will not damage our forests, land and water bodies.

Milestone: By 2008, air throughout Burlington County in conjunction with the State will meet national Clean Air Act standards for ozone and other pollutants.

Activities: We will continue to inspect minor and B source air permitted facilities to determine compliance the State's air pollution control regulations, with emphasis on inspecting gas stations that have not been inspected in 4 or more years.

We will continue to conduct inspections at potential facilities that may require air permits as needed.

We will conduct complaint investigations as referred by citizens and/or NJDEP.

The level of inspections conducted during 2003 is in conformance with our CEHA grant agreement and we anticipate to fully inspect all required facilities.

2. Goal: Clean and Plentiful Water

Burlington County's rivers, lakes and coastal waters will be fishable, swimmable and support healthy ecosystems. Surface and ground water will be clean sources of water. Every person in Burlington County will have safe drinking water. Adequate quantities of surface and ground water will be available for all uses.

Milestone: 95 percent of the public non-community water systems will provide water that meets chemical and microbiological drinking water standards.

Activities: We will continue to inspect non-transient public non-community water systems at least every two years and transient public non-community water systems at least every four years.

We will continue to implement the NJDEP Zero Tolerance Policy for PNC systems found in violation. We will periodically review the NJDEP public water database (PWS) to determine if any PNC systems have failed to sample as required and undertake enforcement, to return violators to compliance. We will also provide correct, updated information on the status of PNC's to NJDEP.

We will continue migrant farm camp well sampling in both pre-season and mid-season. If any exceedances of drinking water standards are found, appropriate compliance and enforcement actions will be taken. All results will be reported to the USEPA at the conclusion of the season.

Inspections to date are above the levels required in our grant agreement.

Milestone: By 2008, 50% of assessed non-tidal river miles will support healthy, sustainable biological communities.

Activities: We will continue to collect surface water samples at the NJDEP selected ambient surface water stations at a frequency of 5 samples over a 30 day period. The samples will be delivered to the DHSS lab or to the DHSS courier for transport to DHSS since DHSS will handle the analysis. In addition to the NJDEP sampling program we will continue to monitor the streams in Burlington County through our 150 station-sampling program.

We have continued to collect the NJDEP station samples during 2003 as well as collect and analysis our department sampling sites.

Milestone: Control pollution emitted to the waters of the State.

Activities: We will investigate all water pollution complaints received from citizens and NJDEP.

During 2003 we have responded to all water pollution complaints received with the majority of the complaints being sewage overflows.

Milestone: By 2008, 100 percent of New Jersey's recreational beaches will be safe for bathing.

Activities: We will perform recreational beach monitoring and pollution source investigations.

We will compile, from all municipalities within the county, the list of recreational bathing areas on lakes and streams, and the number of beach closings required due to water quality impairments.

All recreational bathing beach areas within Burlington County have been inspected. Water quality reports have been compiled for the year and forwarded to NJDEP.

3. Goal: Safe and Healthy Communities

Burlington County will be free from unacceptable human health and ecological risks due to direct exposure from hazardous substances and other potentially harmful agents. Natural resources will be managed to protect the public from floods, fires and storms.

Milestone: Exposure to environmental risks will be controlled and minimized.

Pesticides

Activities: We will conduct inspections of commercial landscapers and pesticide applicators at golf courses, schools, food establishments, and multi-unit dwellings to determine compliance with Pesticide Control Regulations.

All required pesticide inspections have been conducted for 2003.

Site Remediation Program

Activities: We will respond to all hazardous materials emergencies referred by NJDEP at assess environmental health threats and advise hazardous material response units accordingly. We will make recommendations and coordinate these response actions with appropriate federal, State and local agencies. We will ensure that personnel assigned to respond to hazmat incidents are properly trained and participating in a medical surveillance program. This year will continue with a bioterrorism component of our hazardous materials response.

We will investigate hazardous materials complaints received from citizens and NJDEP. All cases requiring remedial action will be referred to NJDEP. A component of our hazardous materials response, which is not directly addressed by CEHA or NJDEP, is that of indoor air quality. We will respond to these types of incidents.

We will continue participation in the pilot project of conducting comprehensive inspections of regulated underground storage tanks.

We have upgraded our equipment inventory, partnered with Burlington County's Public Safety Department to provide a comprehensive response team to address hazmat emergency response investigations. We continue to respond to all emergencies received from NJDEP as well as local sources. We lost one member of our response team early in the year, yet as of this date we have found and trained a capable replacement.

Solid Waste Program

Milestone: To achieve and maintain the safe management of wastes in an environmentally sound manner.

Milestone: 2008 will achieve recycling rates of 75 percent of the total solid waste stream and 50 percent of the municipal waste stream achieved throughout the state.

Activities: We will continue to investigate all solid waste complaints received from citizens and NJDEP.

We will conduct routine compliance monitoring inspections of landfills, transfer stations, Class A recycling facilities, convenience centers, farmland mulch sites, and all other delegated solid waste facilities.

We will continue to monitor solid waste haulers to ensure compliance with the Solid Waste Management Act.

Inspections of solid waste facilities has increased this year and we anticipate fully accomplishing all required inspections by the end of the year.

We anticipate increasing recycling activities for 2004.

Noise Control

Milestone: Control noise that unnecessarily degrades the quality of life and/or affects the health and safety of people of New Jersey.

Activities: We will investigate all noise complaints received from citizens and the NJDEP that are under the jurisdiction of Noise Control Regulations, and if applicable, enforce these regulations to achieve compliance.

All noise complaints received were investigated for 2003. We also have ordered a replaced octave band analyzer to replace an outdated, nonfunctioning one.

4. Goal: Open and Effective Government

The Department will fulfill its vision and mission and achieve its goals through the involvement of citizens and stakeholders as critical partners and through a commitment to quality principles and methods as a means to continuous improvement of its operations.

Activities: We will encourage and develop strategic partnerships with other local, state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, environmental commissions, the general public, and the business community to address environmental issues and concerns.

We will provide education and outreach as well as environmental data to community groups.

We will participate in local watershed management groups.

BURLINGTON COUNTY RESOURCES

- The Burlington County Health Department presently has three environmental health specialists, a supervising environmental health specialist, an environmental health specialist trainee, a senior sanitation inspector, two senior sanitary inspectors, a principal sanitary inspector and an assistant environmental health coordinator assigned to fulfill the requirements as set forth under the County Environmental Health Act. Supportive clerical staff is also part of the resources available.
- Vehicles: all field investigative personnel are assigned an appropriately equipped vehicle.
- Equipment: Various evaluative equipment is available - HNU, OVA, noise meters, stream samplers, personal protective gear, SCBAs, hazmat consumable items, drager tubes, CO meters, CO2 meters, combustion meters, cameras, 5 computers/printers and software as well as GIS/GPS equipment, etc. The equipment is being updated at this time through purchases allocated by two grants, one for bioterrorism and one for hazardous materials.
- The present resources will allow us to satisfactorily carryout the level of activities as delegated in 2004. This is inclusive of local county funding, CEHA grant funding and a solid waste enforcement fee. If there is a substantial increase in the level of activities requested for 2004, resource requirements will have to be re-evaluated.